



# Mask Training Tips for Kids

(And Adults)

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# PICKING A MASK

## PICK A MASK THAT FITS

- Adult masks will not appropriately fit children.
- Use measurement guidelines from the manufacturer or the CDC guidelines found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/DIY-cloth-face-covering-instructions.pdf>

## THINK ABOUT LITTLE EARS



The mask should not pull on the ears. Children may be more comfortable with a mask that secures behind the head.

## MAKE SURE KIDS CAN TAKE THE MASK ON AND OFF INDEPENDENTLY

Kids who cannot tie their shoes without looking will not be able to use a mask that requires knot or bow tying.



# PICKING A MASK

## MAKE IT FUN!

- ♦ Let them choose the pattern, shape, and style if you can.
- ♦ The more choices they feel they have the more compliant they tend to be.

## OWN MULTIPLE MASKS



For kids, masks are like underwear: a new one every day and wash them between wearing.

## CONSIDER OWNING DISPOSABLE EXTRAS AS A BACK UP

Anticipate that kids will sometimes get spit, snot, dirt, and other things on their masks mid-day. They need the option to switch masks if something happens.



# WHEN TO NOT USE A MASK

## MUST BE INDEPENDENT

- ♦ Anyone who cannot take the mask on and off should not wear one
- ♦ Anyone who cannot communicate about their mask should not wear one.

♦ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html>

## NOT FOR BABIES

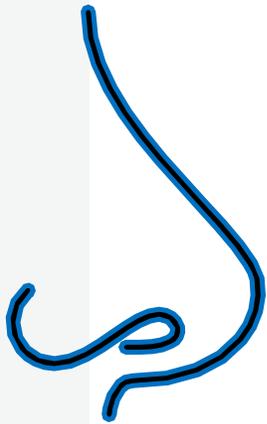


## MEDICAL OR MENTAL HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS

- ♦ Children with sensory processing issues, anxiety, PTSD, or some medical considerations may not be able to complete mask training.
- ♦ If your child seems to be overly struggling with this process have them evaluated by a doctor, OT, or therapist.

# PRACTICE! PRACTICE! PRACTICE!

PRACTICE BREATHING  
THROUGH YOUR NOSE

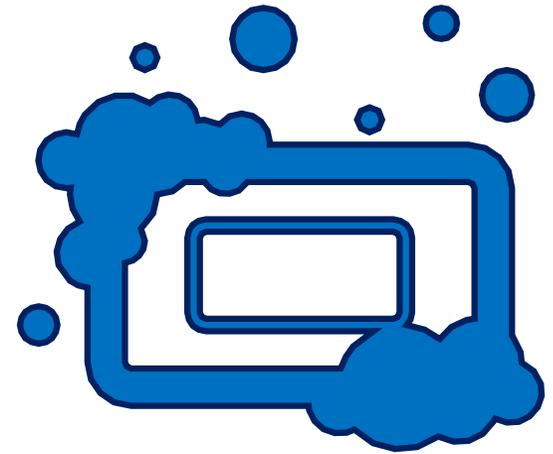


PRACTICE HOW TO TAKE  
THE MASK ON AND OFF



INCLUDING HOW TO PROPERLY STORE  
OR DISPOSE OF MASKS WHEN THEY ARE  
NOT BEING WORN

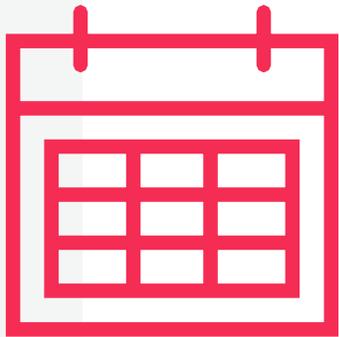
PRACTICE HOW TO WASH  
HANDS



# START WITH SMALL MASK WEARING

## SET ASIDE TWO WEEKS (OR AS MUCH TIME AS YOU CAN)

- The earlier the better so that there is not stress about needing to be fast with the process.



## START EACH TRAINING TIME WITH A GAME

- Mask Safety Game 
  - Give each person a safety or clothes pin
  - If you catch someone else touching their mask you get to take their pin
  - The person at the end of training who has the most pins gets a prize.

## ON DAY 1

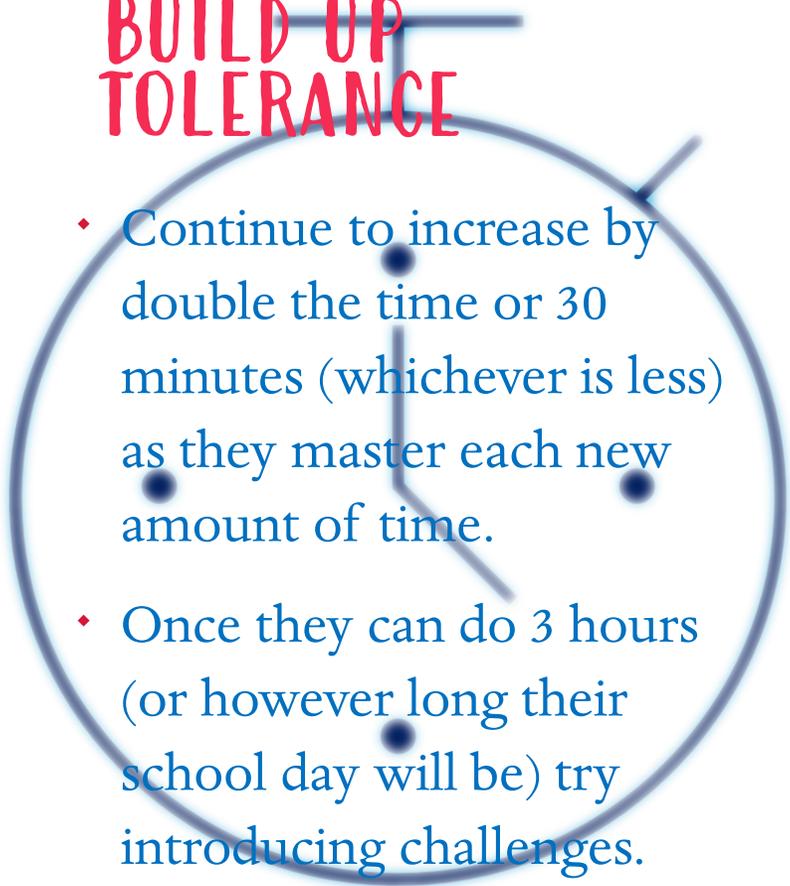
- Have kids wear the mask for “as long as you can”.
- This sets a baseline to give yourself starting place.
- For some kids it will be 10 minutes for some much longer – wherever they are at is ok!

# NOW THAT YOU HAVE THE BASICS...

## EACH DAY...

- ♦ Increase the amount of time by either doubling the time or adding 30 minutes – whichever is LESS.
- ♦ Gauge how they do. If it is easy then proceed. If they struggle, then repeat this amount of time each day until it becomes easy. Then proceed

## BUILD UP TOLERANCE



- ♦ Continue to increase by double the time or 30 minutes (whichever is less) as they master each new amount of time.
- ♦ Once they can do 3 hours (or however long their school day will be) try introducing challenges.

## DO SOMETHING

- ♦ Each day make sure to do something during mask time: go for a walk, play a game, read books, do art, whatever the child would like to do.
- ♦ Do not just sit and wait for time to pass or talk about masks the whole time.
- ♦ Do not use screens during this time since that is not the skill set that will be required at school.

# CHALLENGES

## CHALLENGE 1:

### THE HAND-WASH HURDLES

- ♦ Take off the mask, wash hands, do something small (like brush your teeth), wash hands, put the mask back on, wash hands again and finish mask time.

## CHALLENGE 2:

### OUTSIDE TIME

- ♦ Take off the mask, store it appropriately, wash hands, go outside to play Then come back in, wash hands, put the mask back on, wash hands again and finish mask time.

## CHALLENGE 3:

### SNACK ATTACK

- ♦ Take off the mask, store it appropriately, wash hands, eat a snack, wash hands, put the mask back on, wash hands again and finish mask time.

# CHALLENGES

## CHALLENGE 4: POTTY TIME

- ♦ Use the bathroom while still wearing a mask

## CHALLENGE 5: FRIEND FUN

- ♦ Have a friend over to play while you are both wearing masks.

## CHALLENGE 6: OUT AND ABOUT

- ♦ Go on an outing while wearing masks.

## CHALLENGE 7: TAKE A BREAK

- ♦ Take off the mask, wash hands, Take a socially distanced mask break, wash hands, put the mask back on, wash hands again and finish mask time.

# THINGS TO REMEMBER

## THIS IS HARD WORK

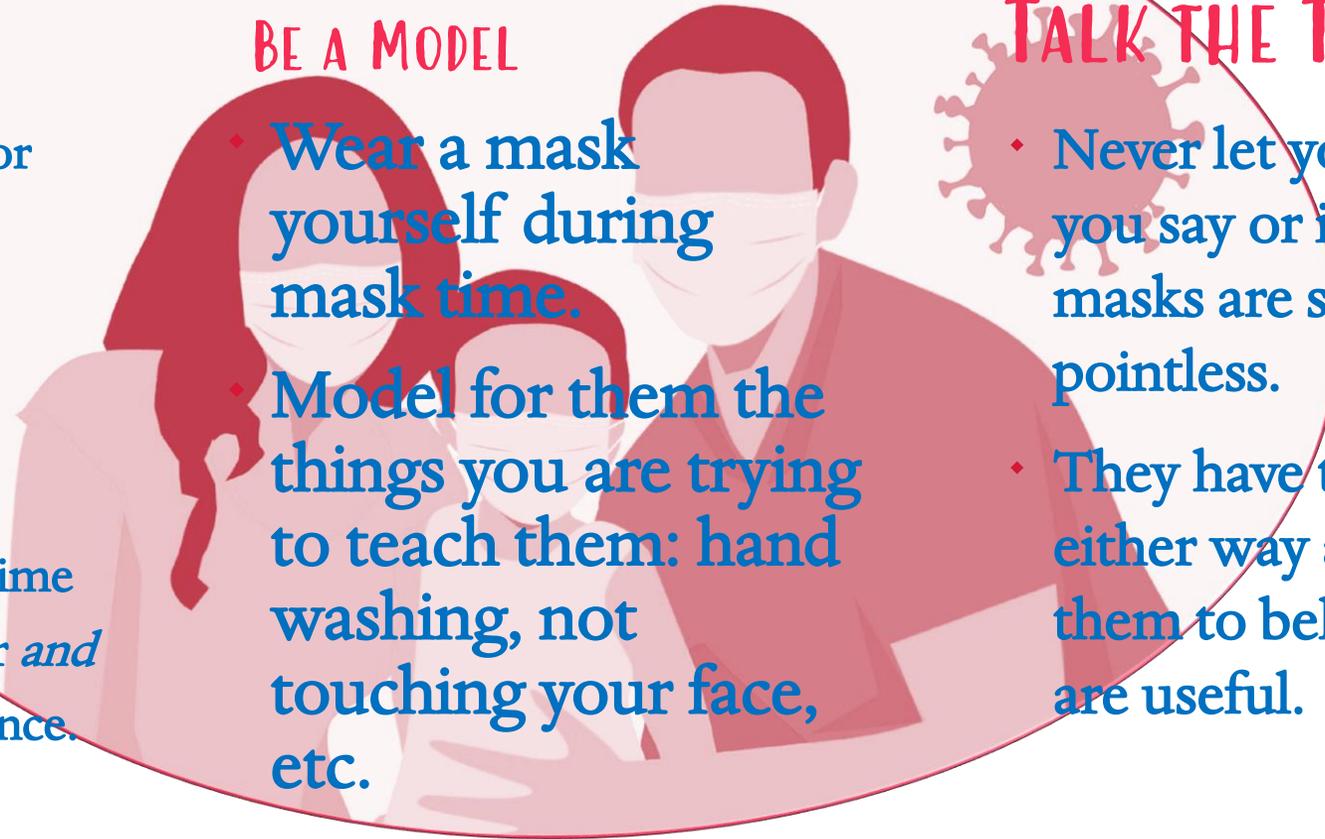
- ♦ It is hard for you and for them.
- ♦ Especially for small children this can be a difficult skill.
- ♦ Only do as much at a time as you can fit into their *and your* frustration tolerance.

## BE A MODEL

- ♦ Wear a mask yourself during mask time.
- ♦ Model for them the things you are trying to teach them: hand washing, not touching your face, etc.

## TALK THE TALK

- ♦ Never let your child hear you say or imply that masks are stupid or pointless.
- ♦ They have to wear them either way and it helps them to believe that they are useful.



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# Bridges and Boundaries Counseling Services

Lillie McCatty is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor in the State of Washington. Lillie comes to you with a Master of Arts in Drama Therapy from New York University (NYU) and a total of 11 years of experience in the field of counseling and psychotherapy with children and adults. In addition to traditional psychotherapeutic techniques Lillie employs a variety of creative arts and play therapies including the use of masks, puppets, sand tray, doll house, visual and dramatic arts. Lillie has undergraduate and graduate level specializations in child and adolescent development and child-focused psychotherapy. She is state recognized as a Child Mental Health Specialist. She has training and experience in Child Life interventions and is therefore qualified to support children who have potentially upsetting medically-related concerns including anxiety around Covid-19 and mask-wearing.

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